



February 17, 2010

Time for Points to Ponder

One question can make the difference between success and failure

... **Kudo's to** Sally, one of my clients, for taking the leap out of her comfort box. Sally and I have been working together for several months on behavioral leadership, in this instance deepening relationships. In a meeting with a prospect, she listened to small talk that she felt was not getting to the heart of the matter. In a quick second, she decided to take a calculated risk. When there was a break in the conversation, she looked at her prospect square in the eye and asked:

When that happened, what ran through your mind?

The floodgates opened wider than she ever thought they would! Her prospect proceeded to tell her how her competition did not meet his expectations, where they fell short, how her competition made him feel and what he values in a consultant. Her one simple question gave her more information than she could have received after hours of discussion. And he was speaking the raw truth with passion and with emotion.

How does this apply to you? Many times we beat around the bush because we are hesitant to share what really matters to us, on a deeper, emotional level. Questions you can ask to uncover this critical information are:

- How did that make you feel?
- What is your pain point?
- Why was that important?
- What brought on that reaction?

The correct response to these questions is an acknowledgment - a validation - of their reactions. You don't have to agree with their reaction, or their perspective. You simply acknowledge it.

So what can you do?

- Be conscious of your listener's words, tone and their eyes. If you sense there is more to what they are saying, ask!
- "I can understand why: you feel that way, you thought that way, you reacted that way" is more powerful than not saying anything.
- Identify, acknowledge and accept any emotions you are feeling, and why you are experiencing those emotions.
- Listen to your voice tone when asking questions - you don't want to sound defensive, accusatory or condescending.

Thanks!

- To Susan and Ken for feedback on my EI Colgan Air Webinar. The [slides](#) are available from my website.
- To Cessna for inviting me to speak at their Pilot Center Conference in Orlando. My session on EI and Flight Operations, was eagerly accepted, and they wanted more information and more examples

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A related blog entry, [Bad Managers Rank #1](#) is available on my website. The left side has our library of complimentary communications [Articles](#), the right side, under Newsletters, has back issues of these communiques.

Have you taken one of our short self assessments? We have one on [Personal Excellence / EI](#) and an [interview with IBD](#) to give you some additional pointers.

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